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Book Reviews

R. SEELEY (Ed.), *Category Theory 1991, CMS Conference Proceedings*, Amer. Math. Soc., 1991, 447 pp.

It is good to know that category theory is alive and well after all these years. We were turned off to category theory by the excesses of the sixties, when a small but loud crowd pretended to reduce all of mathematics to the language of categories. Now at least they have toned down their claims, and category theory has taken its modest place in the mathematical spectrum side by side with lattice theory, more pretentious perhaps than the latter, but with a good pedigree. We wish there were two versions of each of the papers presented at this conference: one for the specialist, as one finds it in this book, and one for the would-be specialist, who needs some direction and encouragement before he or she swallows this morass of definitions.

S. G. GINDIKIN (Ed.), *Spectral Theory of Operators*, Amer. Math. Soc., 1991, 177 pp.

The title is misleading: much of the book is dedicated to estimates of the spectrum of elliptic operators, a worthwhile undertaking even in the best families, but not one that will fire the imagination of younger generations, let alone one that will "sell" the tarnished image of spectral theory to a generation eager for novelty.

B. BOLLOBS (Ed.), *Probabilistic Combinatorics and Its Applications*, Amer. Math. Soc., 1991, 196 pp.

A specialized collection of specialized papers, strictly for specialists, in one of the most specialized specialties of that most special of all subjects, namely, combinatorics.

G. W. MACKEY, *The Scope and History of Commutative and Noncommutative Harmonic Analysis*, Amer. Math. Soc., 1991, 370 pp.

We opened this book with trepidation, hoping at last to have the definitive treatise on harmonic analysis by the great G. W. Mackey. But it only took one second before disillusion set in: indeed, this is not a book, but a patchwork of papers by the author on subjects rotating around the theme of harmonic analysis, and pawned off to an unsuspecting buyer under a deceptive title. It would have been far more honest to have added the subtitle "A Collection of Papers." We thought the AMS did not stoop to these cheap tricks, but we were wrong.

M. GERSTENHABER AND J. STASHEFF (Eds.), *Deformation Theory and Quantum Groups with Applications to Mathematical Physics*, Amer. Math. Soc., 1991, 377 pp.

It is too early to tell whether the current fashion for quantum groups is a genuine turning point in mathematics, or whether it is just the discovery of the wonders of non commutative

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